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SUBJECT: MND READOUT ON OCT 2 N-S KOREAN MIL-TO-MIL TALKS

Classified By: A/POL BRIAN D. MCFEETERS. REASON 1.4 (b/d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: MND North Korea Policy Team Director Moon Seong-mook provided Embassy with a readout on the October 2nd North-South Mil-to-Mil talks. (NOTE: He has also submitted a detailed report of this to UNCMAC). During the two hours of talks, Moon said the DPRK complained about balloons carrying "propaganda" leaflets, "contraband" carried into the North by South Korean tourists, and "provocative actions" by UNC personnel near the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). If the ROK fails to address its concerns, the DPRK stated that: 1) Those carrying contraband into the North will be sent back; 2) Those acting in violation of N-S agreements will be sent back; 3) Those who ridicule or give things to North Korean soldiers will be "deported"; 4) And that the DPRK cannot guarantee the safety of any UNC personnel who approach the MDL without prior notification. The ROK responded to the North by saying it had done its best to discourage the behaviors cited by the DPRK side, but that it cannot police the lawful actions of its private citizens. As for the actions of UNC personnel, Moon said he explained that the DMZ area south of the MDL falls under the authority of the UNC, and that UNCMAC has already taken appropriate steps to calm the situation. The ROK pointed out to the North that the DPRK was in violation of the military assurances it had promised by refusing to negotiate on the N-S railroad project, and by refusing to hold a second round of defense ministerial talks. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Colonel Moon Seong-mook, Ph.D., Director of the North Korea Policy Team at the ROK Ministry of National Defense met with the POL-MIL Chief on October 4 to provide a readout on the October 2, 2006 North-South Korean Military-to-Military talks held at Panmunjom. Colonel Moon, who headed the South Korean delegation to the talks, said he had expected a positive change in attitude because the (North) Korean Peoples Army (KPA) had initiated the request to meet, but that he found "their attitude had not changed at all." Moon reported that during the two hour meeting, the DPRK side voiced three complaints.

-- The first involved "propaganda provocations" by private South Korean religious groups that have sent balloons across the DMZ that carry leaflets, and sometimes food and radios.

-- The second involved "activities" by South Korea tourists

visiting the Kaesong Industrial Complex and Kumgansan Mountain Resort Area, such as the passing of contraband (newspapers, food, etc.) to North Korean border guards and tour guides.

-- The third was a demand for prior notification before any UNC personnel (which the KPA consistently refers to as U.S. Forces) come near the military demarcation line (MDL) within the east or west Joint Security Area (JSA) along the DMZ. They complained of alleged incidents in which UNC personnel had "mocked" the North Korean guards by waving, taking pictures of them, and the like.

13. (C) Colonel Moon said he had responded by stating that the ROK government has observed the N-S 2004 agreement regarding the elimination of propaganda along the DMZ. In addition, he said the ROK had "openly demanded" the private South Korean groups involved in launching the balloons halt their activities because they serve to raise tensions along the DMZ. Beyond that, Moon said he had explained that the activities of these groups was not illegal under South Korean law.

14. (C) Regarding the carrying of "contraband" by ROK citizens who visit the North, Moon said he had pointed out to the DPRK delegation that no agreement currently exists between the military authorities of the two countries governing the behavior of tourists. The ROKG has done its best to educate its citizens on how to behave when visiting the North, Moon had explained, but that "the culture of South Korea is such that its citizens may from time-to-time bring along things that North Korea doesn't like."

15. (C) With regard to the activity of UNC personnel in the JSA, Colonel Moon said he explained that the DMZ area south of the MDL falls under the authority of the United Nations Command. He said the ROKG had discussed the issue with the UNC after the DPRK had threatened last year to open fire on anyone committing offensive activities near the MDL, adding that UNCMAC had "taken appropriate actions and most of the problematic activity had ceased."

16. (C) Moon reported that he in turn raised two points with the KPA. First, he said the DPRK was in violation of the military assurances it had given during inter-Korean talks by refusing to negotiate on the North-South railroad project and flood prevention efforts on the Injin River. Second, he informed the DPRK side that it was failing to build confidence by refusing to hold a second round of defense ministerial talks. According to Moon, the DPRK delegation responded to both concerns by stating that "until the ROK makes an effort to resolve the dispute over the Northern Limit Line, no other issues can be resolved." Before it can agree to another defense ministerial, the South needs to "create a suitable environment" of trust, the North added.

17. (C) The DPRK delegation then presented the South Korean military delegation with four measures it will take (at an unspecified point in the future) if the ROK fails to address its concerns. It threatened that:

-- Individuals or vehicles carrying contraband into the North will be stopped and sent back.  
-- Individuals acting in violation of N-S agreements will be sent back.  
-- Those who ridicule, banter with, or give things to North Korean soldiers within the JSA will be immediately "deported" from the site.  
-- The DPRK warned it cannot guarantee the safety of any UNC personnel who approach the MDL without giving prior notification to the North.

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